

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR****Fish and Wildlife Service****DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants: Notice of Interagency Cooperative Policy for Peer Review in Endangered Species Act Activities**

**AGENCIES:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior, and National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of policy statement.

**SUMMARY:** The Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service (hereafter referred to as Services) announce interagency policy to clarify the role of peer review in activities undertaken by the Services under authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), as amended, and associated regulations in Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations. This policy is intended to complement and not circumvent or supersede the current public review processes in the listing and recovery programs.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 1994.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Jamie Rappaport Clark, Chief, Division of Endangered Species, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, ARLSQ 452, 18th and C Streets, NW., Washington, D.C. 20240 (telephone 703/358-2171), or Russell Bellmer, Chief, Endangered Species Division, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1335 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910 (telephone 301/713-2322).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Background**

The Act requires the Services to make biological decisions based upon the best scientific and commercial data available. These decisions involve listing, reclassification, and delisting of plant and animal species, critical habitat designations, and recovery planning and implementation.

The current public review process involves the active solicitation of comments on proposed listing rules and draft recovery plans by the scientific community, State and Federal agencies, Tribal governments, and other interested parties on the general information base and the assumptions upon which the Service is basing a biological decision.

The Services also make formal solicitations of expert opinions and analyses on one or more specific questions or assumptions. This solicitation process may take place during a public comment period on any proposed rule or draft recovery plan, during the status review of a species under active consideration for listing, or at any other time deemed necessary to clarify a scientific question.

Independent peer review will be solicited on listing recommendations and draft recovery plans to ensure the best biological and commercial information is being used in the decisionmaking process, as well as to ensure that reviews by recognized experts are incorporated into the review process of rulemakings and recovery plans developed in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

**Policy**

A. In the following endangered species activities, it is the policy of the Services to incorporate independent peer review in listing and recovery activities, during the public comment period, in the following manner:

**(1) Listing**

(a) Solicit the expert opinions of three appropriate and independent specialists regarding pertinent scientific or commercial data and assumptions relating to the taxonomy, population models, and supportive biological and ecological information for species under consideration for listing;

(b) Summarize in the final decision document (rule or notice of withdrawal) the opinions of all independent peer reviewers received on the species under consideration and include all such reports, opinions, and other data in the administrative record of the final decision.

**(2) Recovery**

(a) Utilize the expertise of and actively solicit independent peer review to obtain all available scientific and commercial information from appropriate local, State and Federal agencies; Tribal governments; academic and scientific groups and individuals; and any other party that may possess pertinent information during the development of draft recovery plans for listed animal and plant species.

(b) Document and use, where appropriate, independent peer review to review pertinent scientific data relating to the selection or implementation of specialized recovery tasks or similar topics in draft or approved recovery plans for listed species.

(c) Summarize in the final recovery plan the opinions of all independent peer reviewers asked to respond on an issue and include the reports and opinions in the administrative record of that plan.

Independent peer reviewers should be selected from the academic and scientific community, Tribal and other native American groups, Federal and State agencies, and the private sector; those selected have demonstrated expertise and specialized knowledge related to the scientific area under consideration.

**B. Special Circumstances**

(1) Sometimes, specific questions are raised that may require additional review prior to a final decision, (e.g. scientific disagreement to the extent that leads the Service to make a 6-month extension of the statutory rulemaking period). The Services will determine when a special independent peer review process is necessary and will select the individuals responsible for the review. Special independent peer review should only be used when it is likely to reduce or resolve the unacceptable level of scientific uncertainty.

(2) The results of any special independent peer review process will be written, entered into the permanent administrative record of the decision, and made available for public review. If the peer review is in the context of an action for which there is a formal public comment period, e.g., a listing, designation of critical habitat, or development of a recovery plan, the public will be given an opportunity to review the report and provide comment.

**Scope of Policy**

The scope of this policy is Servicewide for all species of fish and wildlife and plants, as defined pursuant to section 3 of the Act (16 U.S.C. 1532).

**Authority**

The authority for this policy is the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1544).

Dated: June 27, 1994.

**Mollie H. Beattie,**  
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,  
Department of the Interior.

Dated: June 24, 1994.

**Rolland A. Schmitten,**  
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,  
National Marine Fisheries Service.  
[FR Doc. 94-16021 Filed 6-30-94; 8:45 am]  
BILLING CODE 4310-55-P



**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR****Fish and Wildlife Service****DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants: Notice of Interagency Cooperative Policy on Information Standards Under the Endangered Species Act**

AGENCIES: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior, and National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of policy statement.

**SUMMARY:** The Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service (hereafter referred to as Services) announce interagency policy to provide criteria, establish procedures, and provide guidance to ensure that decisions made by the Services under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), as amended represent the best scientific and commercial data available. This policy is intended to complement the current public review processes prescribed by sections 4(b)(4)(6) and 10(a)(2)(B) of the Act and associated regulations in title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 1994.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jamie Rappaport Clark, Chief, Division of Endangered Species, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, ARLSQ 452, 18th and C Streets NW., Washington, DC 20240 (telephone 703/358-2171), or Russell Bellmer, Chief, Endangered Species Division, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1335 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910 (telephone 301/713-2322).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Background**

The Act requires the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce to determine whether any species is endangered or threatened (16 U.S.C. 1533). When making these determinations, the Secretary is directed to use the best scientific and commercial data available.

The Services receive and use information on the biology, ecology, distribution, abundance, status, and trends of species from a wide variety of sources as part of their responsibility to implement the Act. Some of this information is anecdotal, some of it is oral, and some of it is found in written

documents. These documents include status surveys, biological assessments, and other unpublished material (that is, "gray literature") from State natural resource agencies and natural heritage programs, Tribal governments, other Federal agencies, consulting firms, contractors, and individuals associated with professional organizations and higher educational institutions. The Services also use published articles from juried professional journals. The reliability of the information contained in these sources can be as variable as the sources themselves. As part of their routine activities Service biologists are required to gather, review, and evaluate information from these sources prior to undertaking listing, recovery, consultation, and permitting actions.

**Policy**

To assure the quality of the biological, ecological, and other information that is used by the Services in their implementation of the Act, it is the policy of the Services:

a. To require biologists to evaluate all scientific and other information that will be used to (a) determine the status of candidate species; (b) support listing actions; (c) develop or implement recovery plans; (d) monitor species that have been removed from the list of threatened and endangered species; (e) to prepare biological opinions, incidental take statements, and biological assessments; and (f) issue scientific and incidental take permits. This review will be conducted to ensure that any information used by the Services to implement the Act is reliable, credible, and represents the best scientific and commercial data available.

b. To gather and impartially evaluate biological, ecological, and other information that disputes official positions, decisions, and actions proposed or taken by the Services during their implementation of the Act.

c. To require biologists to document their evaluation of information that supports or does not support a position being proposed as an official agency position on a status review, listing action, recovery plan or action, interagency consultation, or permitting action. These evaluations will rely on the best available comprehensive, technical information regarding the status and habitat requirements for a species throughout its range.

d. To the extent consistent with sections 4, 7, and 10 of the ESA, and to the extent consistent with the use of the best scientific and commercial data available, use primary and original sources of information as the basis for

recommendations to (1) place a species on the list of candidate species, (2) promulgate a regulation to add a species to the list of threatened and endangered species, (3) to remove a species from the list of threatened and endangered species, (4) designate critical habitat, (5) revise the status of a species listed as threatened or endangered, (6) make a determination of whether a Federal action is likely to jeopardize a proposed, threatened, or endangered species or destroy or adversely modify critical habitat; and (7) issue a scientific or incidental take permit. These sources shall be retained as part of the administrative record supporting an action and shall be referenced in all official Federal Register notices and biological opinions prepared for an action.

e. To collect, evaluate, and complete all reviews of biological, ecological, and other relevant information within the schedules established by the Act, appropriate regulations, and applicable policies.

f. To conduct management-level review of documents developed and drafted by Service biologists to verify and assure the quality of the science used to establish official positions, decisions, and actions taken by the Services during their implementation of the Act.

**Scope of Policy**

This policy applies Servicewide for all species of fish and wildlife and plants, as defined pursuant to section 3 of the Act (16 U.S.C. 1532), and for listing, recovery, interagency consultation, management and scientific authorities, and permitting programs as outlined in, and to the extent consistent with, the provisions of sections 4(a)(c), 4(e)(g), 7(a)(c), 8A(c), and 10(a) of the Act, respectively.

**Authority**

The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1544).

Dated: June 27, 1994.

**Mollie H. Beattie,**

*Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,  
Department of the Interior.*

Dated: June 24, 1994.

**Rolland A. Schmitten,**

*Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,  
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 94-16022 Filed 6-30-94; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P



**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR****Fish and Wildlife Service****DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants: Notice of Interagency Cooperative Policy for Endangered Species Act Section 9 Prohibitions**

**AGENCIES:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior, and National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of policy statement.

**SUMMARY:** The Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service (hereafter referred to as Services) announce interagency cooperative policy to establish a procedure at the time a species is listed as threatened or endangered to identify to the maximum extent practicable those activities that would or would not constitute a violation of section 9 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), as amended, and to increase public understanding and provide as much certainty as possible regarding the prohibitions that will apply under section 9. By identifying activities likely or not likely to result in violation of section 9 at the time a species is listed, the Services intend to increase public awareness of the effect of the listing on proposed and ongoing activities within a species' range.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 1994.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jamie Rappaport Clark, Chief, Division of Endangered Species, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, ARLSQ 452, 18th and C Streets NW., Washington, DC 20240 (telephone 703/358-2171), or Russell Bellmer, Chief, Endangered Species Division, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1335 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910 (telephone 301/713-2322).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Background**

Section 9 of the Act prohibits certain activities that directly or indirectly affect endangered species. These prohibitions apply to all individuals, organizations, and agencies subject to United States jurisdiction. Section 4(d) of the Act allows the promulgation of regulations that apply any or all of the prohibitions of section 9 to threatened species. Under the Act and regulations, it is illegal for any person subject to the

jurisdiction of the United States to take (includes harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect; or to attempt any of these), import or export, ship in interstate or foreign commerce in the course of commercial activity, or sell or offer for sale in interstate or foreign commerce any endangered fish or wildlife species and most threatened fish and wildlife species. It is also illegal to possess, sell, deliver, carry, transport, or ship any such wildlife that has been taken illegally. With respect to endangered plants, analogous prohibitions make it illegal for any person subject to the jurisdiction of the United States to import or export, transport in interstate or foreign commerce in the course of a commercial activity, sell or offer for sale in interstate or foreign commerce, or to remove and reduce to possession any such plant species from areas under Federal jurisdiction. In addition, for endangered plants, the Act prohibits malicious damage or destruction of any such species on any area under Federal jurisdiction, and the removal, cutting, digging up, or damaging or destroying of any such species on any other area in knowing violation of any State law or regulation, or in the course of any violation of a State criminal trespass law.

**Policy**

It is the policy of the Services to identify, to the extent known at the time a species is listed, specific activities that will not be considered likely to result in violation of section 9. To the extent possible, activities that will be considered likely to result in violation also will be identified in as specific a manner as possible. For those activities whose likelihood of violation is uncertain, a contact will be identified in the final listing document to assist the public in determining whether a particular activity would constitute a prohibited act under section 9.

**Scope of Policy**

This policy applies for all species of fish and wildlife and plants, as defined under the Act, listed after October 1, 1994.

**Authority**

The authority for this policy is the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1544).

Dated: June 27, 1994.

Mollie H. Beattie,  
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,  
Department of the Interior.

Dated: June 24, 1994.

Rolland A. Schmitt,  
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,  
National Marine Fisheries Service.  
[FR Doc. 94-16023 Filed 6-30-94; 8:45 am]  
BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR****Fish and Wildlife Service****DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants: Notice of Interagency Cooperative Policy on Recovery Plan Participation and Implementation Under the Endangered Species Act**

**AGENCIES:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior, and National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of policy statement.

**SUMMARY:** The Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service (hereafter referred to as Services) announce interagency policy relative to recovery plan participation and implementation under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. This cooperative policy is intended to minimize social and economic impacts consistent with timely recovery of species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). In addition, this policy provides a Participation Plan process, which involves all appropriate agencies and affected interests in a mutually-developed strategy to implement one or more recovery actions.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 1994.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jamie Rappaport Clark, Chief, Division of Endangered Species, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, ARLSQ 452, 18th and C Streets NW., Washington, DC 20240 (telephone 703/358-2171), or Russell Bellmer, Chief, Endangered Species Division, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1335 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910 (telephone 301/713-2322).



## SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

## Background

Section 4(f) of the Act directs the Secretary of the Commerce and the Secretary of Interior to develop and implement recovery plans for animal and plant species listed as endangered or threatened, unless such plans would not promote the conservation of the species. Coordination among State, Tribal or Federal agencies, academic institutions, private individuals and organizations, commercial enterprises, and other affected parties is perhaps the most essential ingredient for recovering a species.

## Policy

To enhance recovery plan development and implementation, while recommending measures that accomplish the goals of a recovery plan, the Services will:

- A. Diversify areas of expertise represented on a recovery team,
- B. Develop multiple species plans when possible,
- C. Minimize the social and economic impacts of implementing recovery actions,
- D. Involve representatives of affected groups and provide stakeholders the opportunity to participate in recovery plan development, and
- E. Develop recovery plans within 2 1/2 years after final listing.

## (1) Recovery Plan Preparation and Process

The method to be used for recovery plan preparation shall be based on several factors, including the range or ecosystem of the species (limited vs. extensive), the complexity of the recovery actions contemplated, the number of organizations responsible for the implementation of the recovery tasks, the availability and expertise of personnel, and the availability of funds. Outside expertise in the form of recovery teams, other Federal agencies, State agency personnel, Tribal governments, private conservation organizations, and private contractors shall be used, as necessary, to develop and implement recovery plans in a timely manner that will minimize the social and economic consequences of plan implementation.

Team members should be selected for their knowledge of the species or for expertise in elements of recovery plan design or implementation (such as local planning, rural sociology, economics, forestry, etc.), rather than their professional or other affiliations. Teams are to be composed of recognized experts in their fields and are

encouraged to explore all avenues in arriving at solutions necessary to recover threatened or endangered species. Factors for selection of team members are (1) expertise (including current involvement, if possible), with respect to the species, closely related species, or the ecosystem in which it is or may once again become a part, (2) special knowledge of one or more threats contributing to the listed status of the species and (3) knowledge of one or more related disciplines, such as land use planning, state regulations, etc. The Services also will select team members based on special knowledge essential for the development of recovery implementation schedules, particularly development of Participation Plans that are intended to minimize the social and economic effects of recovery actions. Teams should include representatives of State, Tribal, or Federal agencies, academic institutions, private individuals and organizations, commercial enterprises, and other constituencies with an interest in the species and its recovery or the economic or social impacts of recovery.

## (2) Involvement of Affected Groups

Whether a recovery plan is developed by the Service's biologists, contractors, or a recovery team, each plan will seek the best information to fulfill the intent of the Act regarding recovery planning. This information and input from affected interests will be used to develop alternatives for recovery implementation that not only meet requirements for the recovery of a species, but minimize social and economic effects of recovery actions. Representatives of affected interests that can be determined during recovery plan development will be asked to participate during plan development and implementation.

## (3) Implementing Recovery Actions

Implementation of recovery plans will be accomplished through the means that will provide for timely recovery of the species while minimizing social and economic impacts. The Services will involve all affected interests in the recovery plan implementation process through the development of a Participation Plan. A Participation Plan should involve all appropriate agencies and affected interests in a mutually developed strategy to implement one of more specifically designated recovery actions. Participation Plans should ensure that a feasible strategy is developed for all affected interests while providing realistic and timely recovery of the species.

Nothing in this policy is intended to change the current policy of developing recovery plans within 2½ years after final listing of a species (18 months for draft recovery plan and a final recovery plan within an additional 12 months of the draft).

## Scope of Policy

The scope of this policy is Servicewide for all species of fish and wildlife and plants, as defined pursuant to section 3 of the Act (16 U.S.C. 1532).

## Authority

The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1544).

Dated: June 27, 1994.

Mollie H. Beattie,

Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,  
Department of the Interior.

Dated: June 24, 1994.

Roland A. Schmitt,

Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,  
National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 94-16024 Filed 6-30-94; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## Fish and Wildlife Service

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

## National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

## Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants: Notice of Interagency Cooperative Policy for the Ecosystem Approach to the Endangered Species Act

AGENCIES: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior, and National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of policy statement.

SUMMARY: The Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service (hereafter referred to as Services) announce interagency policy to incorporate ecosystem considerations in Endangered Species Act actions regarding listing, interagency cooperation, recovery and cooperative activities.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1994.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jamie Rappaport Clark, Chief, Division of Endangered Species, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, ARLSQ 452, 18th and C Streets NW., Washington, DC 20240 (telephone 703/358-2171), or Russell Bellmer, Chief, Endangered Species